

IN THE CLAIMS

1 - 68. (Cancelled)

69. (New) A lancet cartridge for a lancing device comprising:

- a plurality of lancets, each lancet comprising a protective cap;
- a carrier retaining said plurality of lancets in a plane and defining a path of travel within the plane for each of said plurality of lancets;
- at least one guide member in engagement with the protective cap of each of said plurality of lancets; and
- a spring biasing the protective cap of each of said plurality of lancets out of the plane.

70. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 69, wherein the protective cap of each lancet comprises a pair of recesses on opposed sides thereof, and wherein the carrier comprises a guide member engaged in each of said recesses to constrain the protective cap to motion along a path out of said plane.

71. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 70, wherein the carrier comprises a recess for receiving the protective cap of each of said plurality of lancets upon separation of the cap from the lancet and retaining said protective cap out of the path of travel of the lancet.

72. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 69, wherein the carrier comprises a pair of upright walls bounding the sides of each of said plurality of lancets to define the path of travel of the lancets.

73. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 69, wherein each spring comprises a loop having a pair of legs and a cross-member extending between the legs, said cross-member engaging the protective cap of each of said plurality of lancets.

74. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 69, wherein the carrier is a generally circular disk, and wherein the plurality of lancets are arranged generally radially about the perimeter of the carrier.

75. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 69, wherein each lancet comprises at least one cantilevered spring element for engagement with said carrier to bias the lancet toward a retracted position.

76. (New) A lancet cartridge comprising:

at least one lancet having a protective cap removably mounted thereon, said at least one lancet constrained to a generally linear path of travel;

a spring for biasing the protective cap of each lancet out of the path of travel upon separation of the protective cap from the lancet.

77. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 76, further comprising at least one guide member in engagement with the protective cap to guide the protective cap out of the path of travel of the lancet under the influence of the spring.

78. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 76, wherein said spring comprises a flat section in engagement with the protective cap of each said lancet.

79. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 76, wherein each lancet is slidably mounted on a carrier, said carrier comprising walls defining a path of travel for each lancet.

80. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 79, wherein each spring comprises a generally U-shaped member having a pair of legs straddling said walls, and a cross-member extending between the pair of legs, and wherein the path of travel of each lancet extends through said generally U-shaped member.

81. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 79, wherein each lancet comprises a resilient tongue for engagement with said carrier to bias the lancet toward a retracted position.

82. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 79, wherein the carrier is a generally circular disk, and wherein the plurality of lancets are arranged generally radially about a central axis of the disk.

83. (New) A lancet cartridge for replaceable insertion in a lancing device, said cassette comprising:

a disk-shaped carrier having a first face comprising a series of teeth for cooperative engagement with an advancing mechanism of the lancing device and a second face comprising walls defining a plurality of radial paths; and

a plurality of lancets, each lancet translationally mounted in one of said radial paths.

84. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 83, further comprising a spring for biasing a separable endcap portion of each lancet out of a plane defined by the plurality of radial paths.

85. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 84, wherein the separable endcap portion of each lancet defines at least one groove extending along a side face thereof, and wherein said carrier comprises a guide member in engagement with each said groove to guide the end cap in a direction generally perpendicular to the plane defined by the plurality of radial paths upon separation of said end cap from the lancet.

86. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 83, further comprising a cantilevered arm comprising a locating finger for alignment within a cartridge alignment recess of the lancing device.

87. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 83, further comprising a cartridge stop for preventing re-use of the plurality of lancets.

88. (New) The lancet cartridge of Claim 83, wherein said series of engagement teeth permit advancement in a first direction and prevent advancement in a second direction opposite the first direction.

89. (New) A method of obtaining a sample of body fluid using a lancing device, said method comprising:

cocking the lancing device to engage a first lancet with a drive mechanism, arm the drive mechanism, separate a protective cap from said first lancet, and remove the protective cap from a path of travel of the first lancet; and

actuating the lancing device to drive the first lancet along the path of travel.

90. (New) The method of Claim 89, further comprising again cocking the lancing device to engage a second lancet with the drive mechanism, arm the drive mechanism, separate a protective cap from said second lancet, and remove the protective cap from a path of travel of the second lancet.